
From: Office of Equity <OfficeOfEquity@updates.gov.wa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 3:37 PM
To:
Subject: Office of Equity Statement on Racist Attack in Buffalo, New York



We are devastated by the senseless and violent theft of at least 10 beautiful and sacred lives on May 14, 2022, in Buffalo, New York, at a Tops Friendly Markets store. According to [reports](#), the mass shooting was committed by a shooter that described himself as a white supremacist.

We are hurting because we recognize the mental and emotional trauma that will follow the people who survived and witnessed this racist attack. We grieve for all those who have been lost to white supremacist terrorism.

We are angry that white supremacy and racism continue to prevail in our country because America has not yet reckoned with its historical foundation of genocide, slavery, and racism.

Imagine the victims were your child, your parent, your sibling, your friend, or your colleague. Imagine they ran out of milk and needed to go to the store that day, but they never returned home. How would you feel? How would you react knowing that because of their very existence at that time and at that place they were ruthlessly targeted and gunned down?

The victims of this tragedy were targeted because of how they present to the world. These human beings were murdered because of the **color of their skin**. How would you want leaders to respond?

In the coming weeks, we will likely hear talking heads discuss how the mass shooting was a heinous act of a lone individual. How can it be perceived as an individual act when Black people across America cannot drive, walk, shop, breathe, sleep, run, play, or learn without being murdered? Imagine living in a country where you can be killed for following directions **and** not following directions. Imagine being killed when all you want to do is to live and love in peace.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

These devastating moments show us that we must commit ourselves to building a Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Ecosystem where love is at the center. The alternative is an endless cycle of violence and generational tragedies. We must unlearn the racist habits and attitudes that have formed and perpetuate racist systems and embody new anti-racist habits and attitudes for our children and their children to live in world where they are safe, valued, and loved.

The Washington State Office of Equity was established within the Office of the Governor for the purpose of promoting equitable access to opportunities and resources. The Office envisions everyone in Washington having **full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential** ([RCW 43.06D](#)).

We hope you will [join](#) us as Washington state leads the way in transforming government in a way that achieves equity and justice for all, now and for generations to come.

It is time for more than condolences and thoughts and prayers, it is time for action. The critical question is, "What are you prePEARed to do in 2022?"

Equity and Justice for all,

The Washington State Office of Equity Team

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